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ABSTRACT

Two basic approaches to career education (CE) are available to school systems in Arkansas: a "stand-alone" approach and an "integrated" CE program. The stand-alone course, which is called career orientation (CO), is required for all junior high schools. It consists of four major units: self-awareness; career awareness; employability skills; and career action plans. The Arkansas Workforce Development Department establishes the course's content, curriculum, and instructional methods. Teachers receive endorsement to teach CO courses by taking two graduate-level courses. Because the integrated system of CE is not a required curriculum for Arkansas schools, it does not have a formal teacher endorsement program. The course content, curriculum, and teaching methods of integrated CE programs are left to classroom teachers' discretion. Integrated CE approaches may be installed in Arkansas school systems in several ways: by using a 1- or 2-week period to implement the theme and carrying it through to its end and by setting aside a period of time each day for study of the selected CE-related topic. Classroom teachers need training in career development in addition to training in their field of concentration. Successful integration of CE into traditional subject-area courses requires involvement of the total school community. (MN)

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A Combination of a Stand-Alone and an Integrated Career Education Curriculum

"A Total Learning Approach"

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And

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Running head: A TOTAL LEARNING APPROACH

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Abstract

In today's world students are faced with many decisions in regard to what they will do after they leave the high school setting. One of the most important decisions that will challenge them is the choosing of a career that matches their interests, abilities, and their needs. Career Education facilitates and encourages students to prepare for these decisions while still involved in their basic formal education phase of life.

There two basic approaches to the implementation of Career Education available to school systems in Arkansas. These two basic approaches are:

1) A *"stand alone"* career education approach.

1) An *"integrated"* career education program.

The stand alone course is required for all junior high schools and consists of four major units: a) self awareness, b) career awareness, c) employability skills, and d) career action plans. Teachers receive endorsement by taking two graduate level courses. The course content, course curriculum, and instructional methods are set by the Arkansas Workforce Development Department.

The integrated system of career education is not a required curriculum for Arkansas schools and therefore does not have a formal teacher endorsement program. Course content, curriculum, and teaching methods are left to the discretion of the classroom teacher. An integrated approach incorporates the

study of careers into the standard curriculum that is used by the subject teacher.

This paper explores the implementation of the study of the career world through a learning approach that involves the total school community. The authors encourage all schools to offer their students some type of career development opportunities.

A Combination of a Stand-Alone and an Integrated Career Education Curriculum

"A Total Learning Approach"

Arkansas is lucky in that it has had a required career exploration program at the junior high level for more than 25 years and many school districts have been very innovative in integrating career education concepts at the high school level. The authors have assisted teachers and schools in implementing career education programs for many years. Dr. Harper was a public school program advisor for Career Orientation (CO) with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Development for ten years. Dr. De Vore has been a teacher educator with the University of Arkansas for 27 years and teaches the graduate level teacher endorsement courses for CO.

Stand-Alone Career Education Curriculum

In today's world students are faced with many decisions in regard to what they will do after they leave high school. The most important decision they must make is what career they will choose to enter and what training will be necessary to prepare for that career. Making the correct career decision that matches a student's interests and needs is critical for them to enjoy their work and consequently a major factor in how happy they will be throughout life. CO was designed to help prepare students to make these career choices.

CO is a hands-on, activity based career exploration course in Arkansas offered at the seventh or eighth grade level. The program was introduced as a pilot program during the early 1970's through local vocational agriculture and home economics programs around the state. The school accreditation standards that were approved in 1983 and became effective for the 1986-87 school year required that CO be offered in each school district in Arkansas.

Course Content

The course consists of four major units: a) self awareness, b) career awareness, c) employability skills, and d) career action plans. A semester could be devoted to each of these units therefore a CO instructor must be prepared and keep things moving to cover everything in one semester.

Self Awareness

This is may the most important unit in the course. If students do not understand themselves, they can not be expected to choose a career path that will be satisfying. This unit is to help students to know and understand themselves. Interests inventories, skills tests, aptitude tests etc. are used to provide students a clear picture of their interests, needs, and abilities. They explore personality traits and how these traits relate to different types of jobs.

Career Awareness

There are more than 20,000 job titles listed in the Dictionary of

Occupational Titles and it would be impractical to try to study each job listed. In the CO classroom students study jobs by areas based on the 15 United States Office of Education job clusters. These clusters are: a) agribusiness and natural resources, b) business and office, c) communications and media, d) construction, e) consumer and homemaking, f) environment, g) fine arts and humanities, h) health, i) hospitality and recreation, j) manufacturing, k) marine science, l) marketing and distribution, m) personal service, n) public service, and o) transportation. The jobs within each cluster revolve around a common subject and makes developing lesson plans and presenting information on the vast number of jobs much easier.

Employability Skills

Many students leave high school and college with no idea of how to go about getting a job. In the CO class students are provided the opportunity to develop successful employability skills such as decision making, job application, interviewing, and on-the-job relations. Even though this is at the eight grade many students will not be exposed to this type of information again. Every CO teacher in Arkansas has a story about previous students who say they acquired a job due the skills they learned in CO.

Career Action Plans

At the end of the CO course students are required to develop a career

action plan (portfolio) with the assistance of the teacher(s), counselor, and parents. This plan lays out the general career area, high school course of study, and post secondary training to be pursued. The career action plan is initially based on their CO studies and should be updated annually as they encounter new experiences in high school.

Course Curriculum

The textbook for CO is Your Career Adventure: Exploring and Planning for Tomorrow from South-Western Educational Publishing Company. The text chapters cover the four CO units and the fifteen job clusters. There are also two companion workbooks with exercises and applied learning activities. In addition to the textbook and workbooks, each teacher is to provide computer software and audio/visual aids relating to each unit.

Instructional Methods

Being an activity based program CO teachers are encouraged to keep lecture to a minimum. There are many instructional methods and activities other than lecture to choose from to keep the students interested and involved. A hands-on activity simulating actual job tasks is required for each cluster. Audio/visual aids, field trips, job shadowing, and guest speakers representing various career fields provide students a first-hand look at different types of jobs. As students study each job cluster they research job information using computers

programs and other resources to learn specific duties, educational requirements, salary, skills required, aptitudes, and other factors associated with careers that interest them. Each student is required to keep a notebook or portfolio of occupational information and class activities for the semester.

Teacher Training

CO teachers in addition to having secondary teaching certification are required to take two graduate level courses for endorsement (Methods of Teaching Career Orientation and Hands-On Activities for Career Orientation). Annual in services are conducted by the State CO Office and regional workshops are held during each school year to keep CO teachers informed and updated.

Information Inquiries for Career Orientation

For more information on the CO program in Arkansas contact:

Ms. Janice Hanlon, Program Manager
Career Orientation Program
Department of Workforce Education
#3 Capitol Mall, Room 302D
Little Rock, AR 72201-1083
Telephone: 501-682-1616
FAX: 501-682-1509
E-Mail: jhanlon@worked.state.ar.us

Integrated Career Education Curriculum

Instructional Methods

Methods of instruction will remain the teachers preference. Course lesson plans and activities will revolve around the theme selected. Teaching techniques

may need to be modified in order to add the career involvement to each class. The schools administration and the teaching faculty will need to organize the daily agendas for the entire run of the project in order to establish when field trips and guest speakers would best fit into the schools routine.

Teacher inter-action will be essential to successfully merge a total school approach to learning into an already established school system. The basic concept is to select a topic, incorporate it into an existing school system, and then concentrate on that topic using all class offerings as a learning base. The topic should be selected through the input of all those to be involved. Students who will participate in the learning experience should not be overlooked in the topic selection process.

An integrated career learning approach can be installed into a school system in a variety of ways. One approach might be to utilize a one or two week period to implement the theme and carry it straight through to its end. This approach should not be introduced at the beginning of the school year because most teachers need time to get to know their students and to establish rules and regulations for class participation.

Another strategy for the implementation of an integrated teaching approach to learning might be to set aside a period of time each day for the study of the selected topic. This approach will enable the faculty to dedicate the rest of the day

to basics and other learning tasks. A third method of implementation and one that finds ready acceptance in most circumstances, is to set aside one full day a week to study the selected topic. This approach enables the school system to function on a normal schedule and at the same time permit an integrated system to be established.

Careers can be taught as a part of every lesson. This approach requires that every teacher in the school system infuse into their teaching the study of occupations. A major problem with this approach is that most teacher are so involved with their curriculum that they do not spent enough time addressing the career issue.

An example of a learning nucleus might be the study of Egypt! The total school environment would focus on the study of Egypt, the pyramids, the mummies, the artifacts surrounding the Egyptian world, and all of the occupations that were and are now associated with this ancient world. Guest speakers, field trips to museums, job shadowing, job task simulations, tours to exhibits, etc. should be part of the teaching methodology in this learning technique. These activities create situations that take the students back to the root of all learning; we learn best and retain more by doing!

Course Topics

Using the example of the Egyptian theme, subject areas could incorporate the theme into lesson plans using the following topics:

1) *Math*- (algebra, trigonometry, geometry, and calculus) Study the mathematics involved in the pyramids. Study the careers available to mathematicians.

2) *Agriculture*- Research and study the annual flooding of the Nile, discuss the growing periods, methods of planting, and products of the region. Study the occupations surrounding the agricultural world.

3) *Science*- (physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy) Study the locations of the pyramids. Research the diseases, the animals, and the plant life that existed during the Egyptian pyramid era. Research the impact of the stars in all aspects of the Egyptian world. Study all of the careers engulfed in the science world.

4) *Technology Education*- Study how the pyramids were constructed. Build scale models of the pyramids and research the mode of transportation, then and now. Study the occupations that are included in the world of work under the heading of technology.

5) *Business Education*- Research and establish an accounting system similar to the ones the Egyptians used in their every day lives. Study how and why they were one of the richest nations during that period of time. Look into all of the occupations available in the business world.

6) *Family and Consumer Science*- Research the family lives of the

Egyptians. Study the food and the clothing and prepare samples of both. Find and study all of the careers surrounding the Family and Consumer Education world.

7) *History*- Research and study the background of the Egyptian empire. Include ancient and modern civilizations. Study careers that are now available to historians.

8) *Physical Education*- Research the sports of the ancient Egyptians. Participate in similar competitions and study the advantages and the disadvantages to their physical preparation.

9) *Civics*- Research and study how and why the Pharaohs ruled and how they stayed in power. Study the occupations surrounding the world of civics.

10) *Fine Arts*- Study the arts and the music of the Egyptians. Demonstrate the use of various types of musical instruments. Draw and copy renderings found in the pyramids.

These are only some of the activities that can be performed by the students involved in the study of Egypt. Your imagination is the only limit to activities that can be introduced as a learning enterprise.

Teacher Training

Program success can usually be determined by faculty knowledge, faculty interest, and availability of information. Integrated career programs, in most cases, do not have a formal core of course work. Teachers for the most part are educated

in their field of concentration and not in career development. Thus, it is extremely difficult for class room teachers to stay on the cutting edge of their subject area and at the same time be knowledgeable about occupations in their specialty area. Teachers agree that career education is necessary but they don't have the time or the means to acquire the necessary knowledge to implement it into their already crowded curriculum.

Another problem which minimizes teacher interaction is that most teaching faculty have planning periods at different times throughout the day. This limits the time available for the planning and implementation of any new approach. An integrated career education system requires a great deal of time to design the strategy and a schedule that will allow all who will be involved common meeting and interaction times.

Regardless of the how's or what's, careers must be addressed in our schools system. Career Education is a major part of the total education of our youth and it must not fall to the wayside. Students need to be prepared to make educated decisions about their future.